

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/669,253

Examiner

Bernard E. Souw

Applicant(s)

MIYAI ET AL.

Art Unit

2881

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to the response filed on 08/23/2005 (RCE).
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-14.
3. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
- ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
- (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
- 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____
- ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date _____
- ☐ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
- ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
- ☐ Other _____

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on August 23, 2005 has been entered.

Amendment

2. The Amendment filed 08/23/2005 has been entered. The present Office Action is made with all the arguments being fully considered.

Claims 1, 5, 6, 11 and 12 have been amended.

Claims 1-14 remain pending in this office action.

ALLOWANCE

3. Claims 1-14 are allowed.

Reasons for Allowance

4. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

An inspection apparatus or method for irradiating a patterned sample with an electron beam, so that an inspection image and a reference image can be generated on the basis of a secondary electron or a reflected electron emitted by the sample, wherein an abnormal pattern is determined based on a difference in halftone values of each pixel between the inspection image and the reference image, the inspection apparatus or method further comprising: means for automatically obtaining defect information from the sample and generating a defect distribution chart containing a graphical display of defects for samples, in which a feature quantity of the abnormal pattern is used as a parameter, the feature quantity being based on a difference image and the inspection image, the difference image being obtained from the difference in halftone values of each pixel between the inspection image and the reference image; means for simultaneously displaying at least the inspection image, the reference image, and the abnormal pattern extraction image, as recited in claims 1, 6 and 12, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious by any prior art.

Claims 2-5, 7-11, 13 and 14 are also allowed because of their dependencies, either directly or indirectly, upon claims 1, 6 or 12.

5. Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Relevant Prior Art

6. This prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure: US PG PUB # 2001/0033683, issued to Tanaka et al. However, Tanaka et al. does not teach the limitation regarding a defect distribution chart containing a graphical display of defects for samples and a simultaneous display the inspection image, the reference image, and the abnormal extraction image.


Communications

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Bernard E Souw whose telephone number is 571 272 2482. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday thru Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John R Lee can be reached on 571 272 2477. The central fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571 273 8300 for regular communications as well as for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 571 272 5993.

bes
November 04, 2005


JOHN R. LEE
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2800